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FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
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INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 000727

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/11/2018
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PINS](#) [KCRS](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: PRT SALAH AD DIN: LOCAL AND PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS
BECOMING INCREASINGLY ENGAGED AND RESPONSIVE

Classified By: PRT Salah ad Din Team Leader Rick Bell
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (U) This is a PRT Tikrit, Salah ad Din reporting cable.

SUMMARY

[1](#)2. (C) Local district and subdistrict governments have over the last several months shown increasing signs of engagement with the Salah ad Din Provincial Government and a commitment to meeting the basic needs of their people. Even Samarra, long bedeviled with confused and ineffective governmental institutions, is beginning to engage with the Provincial Government. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)3. (C) Throughout Salah ad Din Province, local district (Qada) and subdistrict (Nahiya) mayors and city councils have been increasingly vocal in their interactions with Provincial government officials, requesting assistance to fulfill the basic service needs of their people. The catalyst for this increased interaction stems directly from the 2008 budget development process. After complaints from localities that capital projects were allocated by the Provincial Council (PC) without their input, the PC reopened the budget and allowed localities to suggest revisions. Leaders in Ad Dawr, the district south of Tikrit, were especially pleased with the revisions to their project list, and have told us that their interaction on the budget taught them how they must be proactive and forceful in pleading their case. They also noted their satisfaction with the way the PC responded to them, something they felt was lacking in the past. (COMMENT: AD Dawr, because of the Sunni election boycott in 2005, does not have a single member on the PC. They have told us that they are excited about the upcoming elections and will be active participants in the voting. END COMMENT.)

[1](#)4. (C) In Balad District, PRT budget coaching served as an impetus for the mayors and city council chairs of Balad, Ishaki, Yethrib and Al Dulu'iyah subdistricts to form an informal district council to press issues of common concern with the Provincial government. Balad Mayor Amer Abood, the most proactive local official in the Province (and a Shia), will head the new council. He will schedule meetings every 15 days with Provincial Directors General (DGs) and will press not just the needs of Balad city, but those of the entire district. He is pushing Governor Hamood to restart monthly meetings between Provincial DGs and local directors, a practice that has been dormant. In a sign of reconciliation, the Shia Mayor and City Council Chair have agreed to spend two weeks assisting Yethrib, a Sunni subdistrict of Balad struggling with governance issues, to develop more effective governmental institutions.

SIGNS OF LIFE EVEN IN SAMARRA

[1](#)5. (C) Even Samarra is on the cusp of developing a more

effective government. The recently-appointed mayor is well regarded in the city by both the GoI and the Province, but there is lingering dissatisfaction that he was appointed by the GoI with the consent of the Governor rather than elected in a local process. A recent visit to Samarra brought Governor Hamood, PC members, and Provincial DGs together with local officials. Salah ad Din PC members pledged in the strongest terms their support for the efforts in Samarra and, in a real first for the PC, seemed committed to providing aggressive oversight of rebuilding efforts in that city. The last remaining piece of the Samarra governance puzzle is the establishment of a City Council. Various factions in the city have brought lists to the PC for a vote, but the PC has not voted on any, telling all comers that it will not vote on any list unless it is truly representative of the people of Samarra. (COMMENT: The PC's interest in ensuring a representative City Council appears genuine and not driven by narrow political or tribal concerns. END COMMENT.)

16. (C) COMMENT: Lessons learned by local officials during the budget process have not been forgotten. They have turned their focus from securing their piece of the budget to demanding improvements in basic services delivery from Provincial officials, who are becoming serious about hearing local concerns and working to fix them. END COMMENT.
CROCKER